ABSTRACT

A method and system of evaluating the performance of a Web site by measuring site performance through the use of probing computers accessing the site including providing executable probing instructions to a probing computer, the probing instructions causing the computer to measure the time to download a predetermined Web page and report the measurement data to a processing computer. The method is further performed by a using a plurality of distributed client computers and a central server and having the steps of communicating a request for work from a client computer to the central server, selecting a work packet for the client computer wherein the work packet includes a work set identifying a Web site for the client computer to probe, using the client computer to download the identified Web site and record performance measurement data relating to the Web site download, communicating the performance measurement data to the central server, and recording the performance measurement data in a searchable database. The invention is also directed to a system for probing a Web site including a distributed network of client computers and a central server. The client computers have client characteristics including a geography, operating system type, and a connection type. The central server controls the probing performed by the distributed client computers and includes a data structure corresponding to each client characteristic, a processor for selecting a work packet for each client computer, and a communication module for communicating with the distributed network of client computers.

45